



***Message from the Director:***

**Thoughts on the City Auditor's Report on the Seattle District Council System**

On Monday, June 29, the Office of City Auditor published their review of Seattle's District Council System. Requested by Councilmember Sally Clark, the audit's purpose was to determine whether the district council system is fulfilling the purposes specified in Seattle City Council Resolutions 27709 and 28115 and to identify recommendations for improving the system.

The Department of Neighborhoods values and recognizes the extraordinary impact that the District Councils and their members have made for their communities. For more than twenty years, members have volunteered countless hours to share information, address neighborhood concerns and exchange information with each other, city departments and elected officials. They have also had an important role in neighborhood stewardship, reviewing and prioritizing applications for City funding programs for neighborhood projects and in serving as a resource for City departments.

The Department of Neighborhoods has recognized that the District Councils are self-governing community groups that respond to the localized needs of their neighborhoods with different approaches. We also understand the challenges of the current system. The City of Seattle needs consistency in the way we provide information to and solicit input from community members, and takes seriously our responsibility to ensure that all populations are represented in civic engagement and are equitably served.

We welcome the Auditor's report and its recommendations which you can view at [www.seattle.gov/audit](http://www.seattle.gov/audit). Our department will review, discuss, engage and collaborate with the District Councils, City Neighborhood Council, Seattle City Council, other departments and the Executive's Office, along with the community at large to explore any clarifications and changes the City will have the authority to make. There are some recommendations that are procedural, and some that will require formal changes to existing legislation. The end goal is to implement changes that will improve effectiveness and provide clarity in the role and purpose for all District Councils and for the City staff who support them.

Stella Chao, Director of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods

